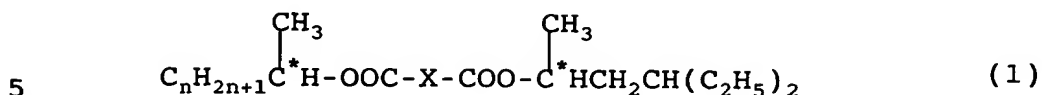


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An optically active compound of the general formula (1),



wherein n is an integer of 4 to 8, X is -Ph-COO-Ph-  
Ph-, -Ph-Ph-COO-Ph-, -Ph-OOC-Ph-Ph-, -Ph-Ph-OOC-Ph-,  
-Ph-Ph-Ph-, -Cy-COO-Ph-Ph-, -Ph-Ph-OOC-Cy-, -Ph-OOC-Ph-  
COO-Ph-, -Ph-OOC-Cy-COO-Ph-, -Ph-OOC-Np-COO-Ph-, -Np-  
10 OOC-Ph- or -Ph-COO-Np- in which -Ph- is a 1,4-phenylene  
group, -Cy- is a trans-1,4-cyclohexylene group and -Np-  
is a 2,6-naphthylene group, and C\* is an asymmetric  
carbon.

- 15 2. The optically active compound of claim 1, which has  
the general formula (1) in which n is 5 or 7.

3. The optically active compound of claim 1, which has  
the general formula (1) in which X is -Ph-COO-Ph-Ph-,  
20 -Ph-Ph-COO-Ph-, -Ph-OOC-Ph-Ph- or -Ph-Ph-OOC-Ph-.

4. The optically active compound of claim 1, which has  
a helical twisting power (HTP) of 10 or more.

- 25 5. The optically active compound of claim 1, which  
induces a helical pitch and has a property that the  
induced helical pitch decreases in length with an  
increase in temperature.

- 30 6. The optically active compound of claim 1, wherein  
two asymmetric carbons shown in the general formula (1)  
are R-configuration isomers together or S-configuration  
isomers together.

7. A chiral dopant of the general formula (1) in claim 1 for a nematic liquid crystal.
- 5 8. A nematic liquid crystal composition containing at least one member compound of the optically active compound of the general formula (1) in claim 1.
- 10 9. A liquid crystal display device having the nematic liquid crystal composition recited in claim 8 interposed between substrates having an electrode each.